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ABSTRACT

To explicate the difference between school management and leadership, a description of principals' behavior, especially in the area of instructional leadership, from their own perspective is presented. The test group consisted of nine Russian, nine Swedish, and two Finnish principals. Data were collected from essays written by the principals in which the topic was "myself as a principal." The results show that Swedish and Finnish principals had a slightly more general perspective than did Russian principals. Swedish principals' descriptions were on the level of actions, whereas the descriptions of Russian principals were more abstract and dealt with the principles of leadership. All groups brought up the administrative factor, which in this context means the creation of the foundations and support for the successful functioning of the school. No single factor in background or environment could be said to have caused any differences in the leaders. But the task areas that the principals regarded as important differed significantly in the different schools. Analyzing the national background of the principals indicates that the systematic education of a principal can be seen in their work. (RJM)

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ED 422 610

Research Report

Matti Erätuuli
Christer Nylèn

The improvement of school leadership

Co-operation between Russian, Swedish and Finnish principals

Part 1: The background, context and the principals' job descriptions

Department of Teacher Education
University of Helsinki

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the basis of cooperation of Russian, Swedish and Finnish principals. The theoretical background is based on the instructional leadership introduced by Barnet. School leadership was studied within this framework. Special attention was paid to instructional leadership, which is a complex procedure to define.

The test group consisted of a total of 20 principals, of which 9 were Russian, 9 Swedish and 2 Finnish. Data was collected from the essays written by the principals. The topic was: "Myself as a principal". The data obtained was analyzed by first categorising it according to the model of Barnet, and then according to the classification of Smith & Andrew. Finally, the single facts were grouped together into factors according to their common characteristics.

The results show that Swedish and Finnish principals had a slightly more general perspective than Russian principals. Swedish and Finnish principals' descriptions were on the level of actions, whereas the descriptions of Russian principals were rather abstract and dealt with the principles of leadership. All groups brought up the administrative factor, which in this context means the creation of the foundations and support of the successful functioning of the school. No single factor of the background or environment could be said to have caused any differences in the leadership. However, the model of Barnet was found to be suitable as a model for the instructional leadership.

Key words: peer assisted leadership, principals job, principals task areas

Nis education project was financed and organized by Mid Sweden University and the evaluation research was a joint project between University of Helsinki, Mid Sweden University and Sochi Education Department in Russias

INTRODUCTION

This evaluation project is one part in an ongoing educational project between Mid Sweden University, Universjty of Helsinki and Sochi Education Department in Russia. The history of this co-operation goes back to 1991 and has mainly covered the area of in service training for teachers and school leaders. It has been a great pleasure for me to act as a co-ordinator of this evaluation project and I very much would like to thank Matti Erätuuli and Christer Nylèn for writing this report. I also would like to thank Kauko Hämäläinen, Ivan Prodanov and Irina Badayan for their great support to make this project come through. Finally I also would like to thank the school leaders from Sweden, Finland and Russia for taking part in this project. They are of course the most important people in this project. They have been collecting all the data by making interviews and shadowing their collegaues. This is the first time ever that this model has been used between countries and people from totaly different cultures and languages. From that point of view the results from this study is even more interesting.

Erätuuli has written capitals 1; 2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.

MITTHÖGSKOLAN

MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

Härnosand. Sweden. 25 April 1995

Conny Björkman
Educational Liasion Officer
Mid Sweden University

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

In this study the general framework (see fig. 1) was the classifying frame in the description of principals job (Barnett, B. & Mueller, F. 1989). The first part of this study described principals´ behaviour in the frame of school management and leadership. The main concepts of the description were: the principals´ background and context, instructional- leadership behaviour, resources and outcomes. Background variables include the following components: the community, which consists of the local school administration, socioeconomic status, ethnic composition, transiency and parent support; the principal's beliefs and experiences which include the principal's professional experiences, personal history and the philosophy of schooling; the institutional context which consists of district programmes, state programmes and professional affiliations; and the principal's behaviour, which includes everything that principals do in their schools, for example goalsetting, monitoring, evaluating, communicating, scheduling, allocating, resources and organising, staffing, modelling, coverning and filling in.

In the model the variable "Resources" includes two main components: instructional climate and instructional organisation. The instructional climate encompasses the physical plant, the social curriculum, discipline, and the interrelationship of students, staff and community. The instructional organisation consists of academic curriculum, the class structure, the assignment of students, students´ evaluations and promotions, teaching techniques, homework, grouping, staff development, evaluation and in-service-training. The variable "Outcomes" includes factors such as achievement, self-esteem, responsibility, citizenship and attitudes towards learning .

This report focuses on the description of the principals´ behaviour from their own perspective, the description of the principal's

cultural background and context and connections between cultural context and the principal's behaviour.

In the model of the instructional leadership, the column of background and context are divided into three factors. These factors are community, the principals´ beliefs and experiences and the institutional context. All three factors are more or less connected with the cultural background of the country. In this study, the second column describes the principal's action. The third column describes the instructional climate and the instructional organisation, which are strongly connected with the principal's action. The fourth column describes the students outcomes which, is in this context approaches goals.

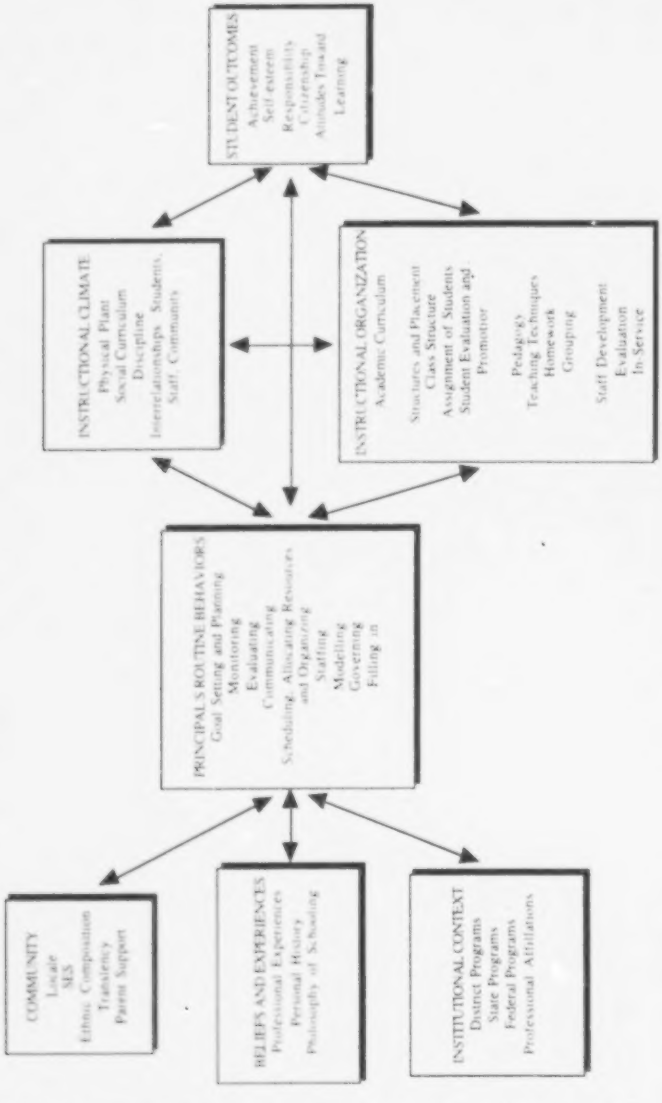

FIGURE 1. THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (BARNETT, B. & MUELLER, F. 1989, 562)

1.2 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND PEDAGOGIC LEADERSHIP

The border between school management and leadership is not clear; so it may be better to first survey the whole administrative process, that is all of the principals' task areas and activities. The components of the whole process are (Miklos 1980): planning, decision making, organising, coordinating, communicating, influencing and evaluating. These components of the ideal administrative process are effective in the following five task areas of school management: the school programme, pupil personnel, staff personnel, community relations, physical facilities and management.

Since cultures vary, each country has its own way of adapting to the eight components of the management process. The main principles, however, are the same as those proposed by Miklos (1980) and as seen in table 1.

TABLE 1. IDEAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES, TASK AREAS, AND ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Components of process	School Program	Pupil Personnel	Staff Personnel	Community Relations	Physcical Facilities	Management
Planning	Identify spesific objectives and devise means	Inventory of numbers and special needs	Staff needs and development	Program of school, Community contact	Design of buildings, facilities	School management system
Decisions making	Select objectives and means decite content of program	Space and services required	Recruitment and selection of staff	Form and frequency of contact	Best use of available space, changes	School needs, requisites
Organazing	Schedule cources and individual programs	Grouping pupils, accounting procedures	Assign teaching duties	Schedule contacts for year	Use of space and equipment	Procedure, delegation of duties
Coordinating	Maintain balance in program	Special services, movment of groups	Relate work of teachrs	School and community activities	Relate need to availability	Management with other activities
Communicating	Among staff on program involvement	Needs to higher levels	Provide and receive information	Exhange information	Needs to higher level	On needs with staff
Influencing	Available of resources and work on program improvement	Pupil control, provision of services	Motivate teacher improvement	Attitudes toward school	Extent of use of facilities	Allocation of recources
Evaluation	Asses outcomes and adequacy of program	Pupil progress, adequacy of services	Assist with self-evaluation, formal evaluation	Efectiveness of relations	Use of relations	Effiency of procedures

Educational administration can be broadly defined as a process of working with and through others to accomplish school goals efficiently. The four essential elements of the definition are action, goals, limited resources and working with other people. (Sergiovanni 1991, 15).Sergiovanni (1991,15) indicated that effetiveness and efficiency are two universal concerns of administration.

Most administrative theories consider management and leadership to be two distinctive expressions of administrative practice. The theories point out that the principal is responsible for those who have specially-designed tasks. The principal's job is to coordinate, direct and support the work of others. This is accomplished by defining aims and goals, evaluating, providing the resources, building a supportive climate, communicating with parents, planning, scheduling, resolving conflicts, handling student problems and otherwise helping to keep the school running smoothly.

Without a closer definition, pedagogical leadership is normally used in discussions of school administration. The used definitions of pedagogical leadership range from methodical guidance in the school to the design of school buildings and the purchase of teaching and learning materials. When the term pedagogical leadership is used in the meaning of methodical guidance, it is too narrow a definition to explain it. A wider definition of pedagogical leadership could be explained as a synonym for goal-oriented leadership. Ståhlhammar (1994, 20) includes the following components of pedagogical leadership:

- Organisational, administrative and economic on the administrative level,
- Social, moral/ethical, value-based and identity-building on the stabilising level,
- Psychological, motivating and individually-analysing on the supportive level,
- Pedagogical, creative, methodical and didactic on the initiative-taking level and
- Ideological and holistic on the goal-assertive level.

Ståhlhammar (1994,20) has defined pedagogical leadership as the head's ability to lead the organisation professionally enabling the work to lead to the highest possible degree of goal realisation. Ståhlhammar continues: "The professional school leader is a separate vocation where professional authority is based on the head's ability to practise pedagogical leadership".

This definition is wide in the meaning of the principal's task areas. The task area , connected with pedagogical leadership, depends on the way this task area is connected with goal realisation. The framework of pedagogical leadership in this study is a practical way to describe pedagogical leadership.

2 METHODOLOGICAL AND STRATEGIC PREMISES

In Figure 2 clarifies the design of the study method. We have collected more data than necessary in the pre-study. We collected the data in three ways: First, every principal in the group, a total of 20 principals, wrote essays on the topic "Myself as a principal". All the data was gathered at the beginning of the first working period. The essay was used to gather data, because the number of the principals in the study was rather small. An other reason for using this kind of data was to gather authentic data. The second way to collect data was connected with shadowing. In this study, shadowing meant one principal working and another principal shadowing and collecting data by observing. When the observation was over, it was followed by an interview about the observed action. In a Peer-Assisted Programme, which was developed by Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, USA, the interview was called a reflective interview (Barnett 1982). This programme was not a PAL-programme because the principals worked together only two days and they had a very short training period before observing and interviewing.

The objective of this pre- study was to characterise:

1. **How the Russian, Swedish and Finnish principals described their jobs?**

The second aim was to clarify:

2. **Are the cultural backgrounds and contexts of the principals connected with their description?**

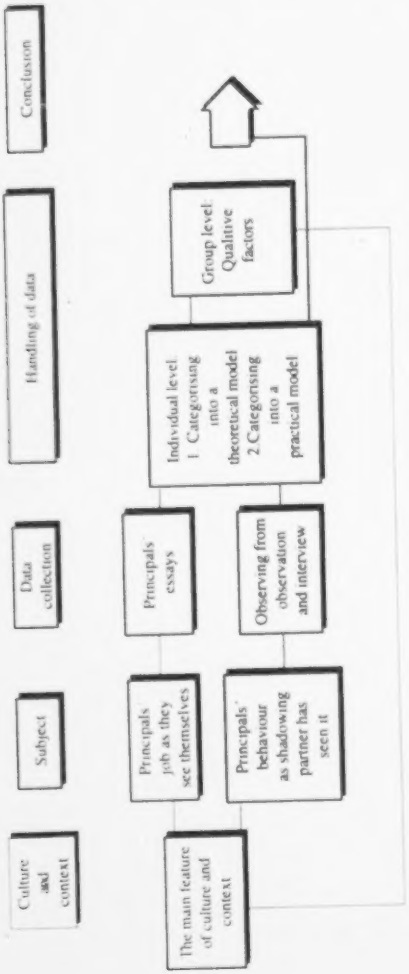
Conclusion
Handling of data
Data collection
Subject
Culture and context
Group level Qualitive factors
Individual level 1. Categorising into a theoretical model 2.Categorising into a practical model
Principals essays
Observing from observation and interview
Principals job as they see themselves
Principals behaviour as shadowing partner has seen it
The main feature of culture and context

FIGURE 2. STUDY DESIGN

The first analysis of the data was the following: each statement, a sentence or an independet part of it, was categorised into the framework's four columns. Similar behaviour was put into the same group in the column. We characterised our grouping system as **"Qualitative factorising"**. Our work was to find connections between the descriptions in the four columns.

The second analysis of the data was more practical than the first one: each principal was characterised according to the profile of four frequencies (Smith and Andrews 1989). Using the profile it was possible to study how principals in the different schools and different countries saw their work.

The following system was used to descripe the data: the description system consisted of four categories by Smith and Andrews (1989, 17 – 21). These categories were "The principal as a resource provider", "The principal as an instructional resource", "The principal as a communicator" and "The principal as a visible presence".

The first dimension, "The principal as a resource provider" consists of the following components:

The principal promotes staff development activities for teachers and has knowledge about instructional resources. He/she mobilises, and the district support help, to attain academic achievement goals. The principal is considered an important instructional resource in the school. This dimension of the description systems consists mainly of the components from the process (Miklos 1980), such as organising, coordinating and decisionmaking.

The second dimension, "the principal as an instructional resource", consists of the following components: the principal encourages the use of different instructional strategies and the principal is sought out by teachers who have instructional concerns or problems. The evaluation of performance helps to improve teaching. With the aid of the principal, according to Miklos (1980), the components of the process approach planning and evaluation.

The third dimension, "The principal as a communicator", consists of the components: improved instructional practice results from interactions with the principal, and formal discussions concerning instruction and student achievements are lead by the principal. The principal uses clearly-communicated criteria for judging staff performance and provides a clear vision of what the school is all about. He/she also provides frequent feedback to teachers regarding classroom performance by communicating to the staff regarding instructional matters. This dimension is similar to the component of the process known as communication in the Miklos' paper (1980). However, in this dimension (Smith & Andrews 1989, 32 – 37), the description stresses more information between principals, staff, students and parents.

The fourth dimension, "The principal as a visible presence", consists of the following: by discussing matters dealing with instruction and making frequent classroom observations, the principal becomes an active participant in staff development activities. The principal is always available to both staff and students.

Because the data acquisition in this study was qualitative and very small, it may be indispensable to only describe the top point of the profile.

3 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 THE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF RUSSIAN PRINCIPALS TOWARD DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

3.1.1 THE BREAKDOWN AND THE HERITAGE OF YESTERDAY

The political transformation of Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990 had a crucial impact on practically all spheres of life, including education and work. Under the new circumstances education is to be liberated from its ideological corset. The post-communist authorities are abandoning the state monopoly in the field of education. The decentralisation of management and decision-making has become a commonly dominant goal. Local selfgovernments exert

more and more influence. The school autonomy allows for the shaping of curricula and solving organisational problems.

In the former USSR and other East European countries under socialism in spite of the rather universal access to education, mostly on the primary and secondary levels, the administrative functioning of the school system left much to be desired. According to Kwiatkowski et.al. (1993) this was generated by the following factors:

- an overestimation of ideology in the educational system; ideological objectives dominated over the essential goals of teaching, which had disadvantageous effects upon the staff selection and contents of education;
- excessive centralisation and bureaucracy of the school management, which resulted in a limited school and teachers' autonomy;
- favouring traditional, authoritarian methods of teaching that seemed to be most convenient from the point of view of the authorities of the socialist state;
- external domination and social hierarchy in education – a supervisor being more important than a school director, the director having priority over a teacher and the teacher coming before a pupil;
- artificial, often schizophrenic, educational ambiences owing to the fact that the school demanded acceptance of contradictory values in comparison with what was taught in the family; and
- the separation of school and life, insufficient links between school education and economy and an inadequate preparation for work.

Badayan and Prodanov (1991) concluded that the former state of education in Russia laged behind the social, cultural and economic processes in the society. It did not supply the students with the general scientific, realistic vision of the world; it did not help students master the ways and skills of thinking; it did not give students an objective vision of themselves, neither for understanding the meaning of life, nor the values and basics of living. The education

system did not help to build up the traits necessary to succeed in the new situation of a free entrepreneurship and competition. "To determine the present state of education in Russia, we have to admit the socio–economic fallacies and uselessness of it for the nation. This explains why millions of people with higher education and skills in Russia work in the fields of economy, where their knowledge and degrees are not needed. As a result, the majority of students and their parents are disappointed by the quality of education." (Badayan and Prodanov 1991)

There is a radical difference between the current implementation of the educational reforms in Russia and all the former Soviet reforms because of the drastic social, economic and political changes which are taking place. According to Tryapitshina (1994), the reforms have an explosive character:

- "...when there is a big gap between the system of education and the realities of life;
- when the society witnesses the change of political and socio–economic orientation;
- during the change of educational paradigm."

3.1.2 REGIONAL RE-DESIGN OF EDUCATION

Since 1992, the Administration of Sochi and the Ministry of Education have been working on the development of the new regional education system. Regional cultural self–determination and corresponding regional programmes for the development of education, together with the transmission to the new economic relations and market economy, were taken into consideration for forming this new education system. The aim of education is to realise the possibilities of every person, to develop the spiritual values of personality. The sense of every teacher's work must be a child, his present situation and his future. Education should be based on the realities of life, but not on "social myths" created by the former totalitarian regime. Education goes ahead state policies, and no longer follows the party decisions. (Badayan and Prodanov 1993)

The principles, which the new regional education system is based on, are: a democratic society starts with a democratic school, thus democratisation of the school comes first. The democratisation in education is aimed at:

- the public–state system of education, granting equal possibilities for individuals, public organisations and administration to participate in the promotion of education. The Council for Education unites representatives of different departments and branches of the city economy. The local school councils are elected by teachers, students and parents;
- decentralisation of the educational management. In place of the former Centre that used to determine education policies at all lévels today the schools have the freedom to decide the majority of the questions;
- rights for the units of the education system to choose the strategy for their development, as well as the aims, contents and method of working. They have legal, financial and economic independence; and
- a chance for interrelations among the educational staff; instead of strict subordination cooperation appears: school teams, teachers and students, teachers and administrators, the school and the community and the state.

Multifariousness and variety in the system elements, meaning different types and models of schooling (state, non–state, alternative, home–based, etc.) and the possibility for everyone to choose the type and model they wish has been emphasised.

The regionalization of education has also been focused on. There used to be a uniform education model in all schools throughout the Soviet Union. There was no place in the curriculum for the study of the local region, its history and culture. Thus, while studying the geography and history of the country and the world, students were ignorant about the history of Sochi, its national, economical and cultural development. The region is utilising its right to design its strategy, adopt the curriculum and the programmes to the specific socio–economic, cultural, national and demographic environment of the region.

Self-determination and openness are still other vital principles. These goals were absent in the education system of Russia for 70 years. The result was the distortion of international relations and crisis of the national cultures. Nowadays several community-based Armenian and Georgian schools were started in Sochi, as well as Sunday schools teaching Greek, Adyg, Ukrainian and Jewish cultures. Based on the national traditions, such schools are becoming tools for national recovery and serve as new harmonious links between communities in the city. The openness of education means international education, global understanding, depolitisation and de-ideologisation of the school, making it part of the world educational system.

Humanisation of education means that a school exists for the child. The out-lived formal school served of the State interests, but never the child's interests. The school kept speaking about preparing the student for life in the future. The child should live successfully right now, not be getting ready to live in the future.

In developing education, schools are on the way to escaping from the conventional methods of teaching by lecturing, where students are passive. New techniques are being introduced to activate the research potential of students, their thinking skills, using different forms of classroom work, including teamwork and games.

Education is seen as continuous and on-going process. The present environment dictates the on-going changes in the way of life, the manner of working and the contents of jobs. There is a demand for continuous, life-long promoting in education. Thus, the system of education is to guarantee the on-going character of study, to secure the right to change professions, any time and according to the wants and abilities of each individual.

3.1.3 NEW MODELS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The Department of Education in Sochi is reorganised and the administrative strategy has changed from running institutions and managing people to guiding the process of improvement. "We consider our role as giving a wide range of possibilities to schools

and teams of teachers, who should decide and choose for themselves," (Badayan and Prodanov 1993)

The new management strategy for supporting improvement means that brand new concepts are tested on experimental sites, through the centre for teacher-training. Extension courses for teachers provide training for the new school environment, meeting the needs of the community. There are teams of advisers who provide outside assistance.

The schools and the Teacher-training Centre work together in a way as noted by Tryapitshina (1994): "There is one more feature characteristic of pedagogical education now: pedagogical universities now tend to become the centres of culture, science and education in their regions. The pedagogical university becomes the factor of democratic development of the whole regional system of education."

Schools in the region should all provide the level of knowledge, life skills and culture which are necessary for a full life in a developing society. According to Badayan and Prodanov every school principal should:

- "revise the curriculum and programmes, the content of education; to intensify humanitarian and cultural paths in education;
- differentiate the education according to the abilities and interests of the pupil and his professional orientation independently and providing a real choice of subjects and professions;
- provide a choice of schools and the free transitation from one school to another;
- change the content and the working methods of education; and
- take into consideration the individual and humanitarian training of teachers, to create the atmosphere and to give support to the innovating work of education."

One observation made by Bojlert et.al. (1993) was that the decentralisation of power from the state to the regional educational administration was quite evident. The local schools and school leaders were encouraged to take initiatives on their own in order to develop their schools. Plans for improvement have to be accepted by the regional educational administration. The response to this was positive, according to Bojlert. "It is quite obvious that teachers and school leaders have the freedom and possibility to propose changes."

In comparison with the relationship between the local school and the municipal authority in Sweden, it seems that the schools in Sochi are evaluated and assessed more frequently and in a more detailed way. Maybe the local schools should take several steps on the path towards freedom.

However, there are some problems in the current change process, such as teachers who are reluctant or not competent, the effects of the economical crisis, a shortage of material resources, and a lack of books and materials adjusted to the new topics and the new ways of working. (Forslund et.al. 1993)

3.2 THE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF SWEDISH PRINCIPALS: DECENTRALISATION FOR IMPROVEMENT

New modes of control have now been rapidly introduced into the Swedish school system. This is officially called decentralisation and more specifically "goal steering". Decentralisation is a question of control over education and its results. Looking closer at it in its present form, one obviously finds the decentralisation mainly aiming at re-designing the political influence, and not to any important extent, aiming at increasing the influence of other stakeholders. It should perhaps rather be called deconcentration, i.e. local political actors are allowed a greater participation in the planning and decision process, while at the same time important instruments for control are kept at the central, national level (Lander1991).

The decentralisation or deconcentration takes place within a very strong bureaucratic tradition. This tradition has defended an administratively clear chain of responsibility anchoring the bureaucracy to political power.

The recent economic stagnation in Sweden sharpens the necessity to be aware, both of the economic costs for and the possible investments and profits of education. There is a need for a new division of labour between the centre and the periphery. There is a role for the centralised planning of education for the labour force at the national level, and decentralisation seems to provide a solution to the problems of cost effectiveness.

According to Lander, the new steering model will thus encourage the state to monitor and guard productivity in education, while the local level must monitor and guard efficiency. This implies that policy contains two parallel modes of control–centralisation and decentralisation. Centralisation will take care of goals and evaluation. Decentralization will take care of school improvement.

Recent reforms for the upper secondary level take these two routes. A structural reform affects the programme structure for the whole upper secondary school, and within that the vocational programmes have been extended from two to three years and a new syllabus–model has been introduced. At the same time, the curriculum reform was anticipated by a voluntary developmental programme regarding the internal work of the upper secondary school.

The task for local improvement work could be defined as better efficiency. This means that cost effectiveness is more important than substantive advancement in relation to over–arching goals. It could also mean that the process of improvement and the commitment to this are the most important measures of efficiency. Decentralisation in Scandinavia could be described thus: "The goal then becomes to create a climate of change rather than change in a particular specified direction... a climate of critical self–evaluation and commitment to improvement" (Lauglo, 1985)

3.2.1 STEERING BY ASSESSMENT

The Swedish proposals suggest a change from the state being both mandator and executive to one in which the state is mandator and the municipality the executive (Smith, 1993). The exact nature of the relationships between the municipality and its schools, however, and their respective responsibility seems unclear.

It is suggested that the responsibility for ensuring that schools are responding appropriately will lie ultimately with principals or "school leaders", along with teachers and pupils within some framework of relationships between the municipality and each school. However, neither the exact nature of this framework nor the specific areas of respective responsibilities appear to be clear.

In his analysis of the ongoing changes in schooling in Sweden Smith finds "that whereas on the surface it appears that the decentralisation afforded through goal steering in designed to give municipalities and schools more decision-making freedom in matters of curriculum, that somehow there is a degree of reluctance to do this and there will still be a high level of control by the state over the affairs of schools". Control may be exercised through the assessment system of detailed subject syllabi. Smith notes that if one of the desired aims of the reforms is to increase the diversity of schooling and thus freedom of choice for parents in an education market, then attempting control through the assessment system, according to emerging experience from the USA and the UK, will serve to restrict schooling options rather than increase them. Steering by assessment reduces rather than increases diversity.

The current proposed changes are fundamentally different in their nature from the decentralisation that took place in the 1980s in Sweden, which centred around the development of Local School Plans. The reform was more concerned with the structural arrangements and organisation of the management of schools at the municipal level. The current proposed reforms are not centrally concerned with administrative or organisational issues. Rather, they are concerned with the relationships between the state and

municipalities and schools concerning the steering of the curriculum and its assessment. The change, according to Smith, is more concerned with questions related to selection, organisation and the structuring of knowledge and learning activities as the basis of the curriculum experiences of students in schools.

The question now, according to Gustafson & Lidström (1991), is whether the local level will take the superimposed responsibility, or if it is going to export its problems downward in the political system or back to families or individuals. Traditionally, municipalities have had a strong political authority through their right to impose taxes on inhabitants (about 30 %), their wide service supply to inhabitants, and by their accountability through elections. But recent trends seek to split up the municipal authority regarding the "soft" questions like the schools and culture, into sub-local political bodies or by giving authority to the local school.

Thus, an important question is about the authority and the capacity of the municipalities to handle the new responsibilities and how the local school, the teachers and the school leaders react and are dealing with the task to integrate the centralisation and decentralisation movements.

3.2.2 NEW MODELS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

In the spring 1991 a decision was taken in the Parliament about the way in which school management is to be organised in municipalities and schools. As of this year municipalities and schools are more free than ever to create their own local designs for management bodies in the school. It was declared that all schools were required to have a schools manager – a rector – that who would manage the school, in order to become familiar with what happens in the school. The position of rector was also opened to persons who were not teachers. From 1913 to 1991 there was a legal provision stating that a school leader was required to be trained as a teacher. Now the legal demand only refers to insights in to pedagogy without reference to any particular educational background. The reason for this shift was to enable the municipalities to freely structure their work. In some municipalities school

psychologists, social workers or people from the pre–school system could become rectors (Ekholm 1993).

The municipalities quickly began to reconstruct the school management in such a way that within a few years there will be many more school leaders in Sweden; and the new rectors will be responsible for smaller numbers of students and teachers compared to earlier. The main reason was to reduce the distance between the day-to-day events and the management body. During the seventies and eighties many school management areas grew into large local organisations, and there have been critical voices saying that school leaders lost sight of what was really happening in the schools.

The school management area is divided into several working units and in each of these a teacher has the responsibility as the unit–leader. In most schools, both in the primary schools and upper secondary schools, the school leader and her assistant use these teachers as submanagers in the school management process. The school leader, her deputies and the unit leader meet regularly to decide on important local topics. The unit leaders participate both in important policy decisions of the school and in the day-to-day work of the teachers. The school leader and her deputies have a small amount of teaching responsibility to share within their group, which sometimes means that one of the group does not teach at all. Sometimes the school leaders divide the teaching responsibility in such a way that all of them teach.

3.2.3 LEADERS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The conditions and demands of yesterday implied that school leaders did not have to possess the competence to manage improvement. The demands for knowledge of the school as a local organisation, and how it reacts to change and development activities, are now expressed in clear and unambiguous terms. Unfortunately, many school leaders have not yet discovered this new field. School leaders are facing a double pedagogical challenge: firstly to capture the sociological and psycho-sociological perspectives of the local school and educational change, and secondly to

implement and help the members of the organisation to recognise and understand those perspectives.The school leader becomes a trainer of teachers.

Any curriculum proposal that is based on significant changes in the habits, interests, beliefs, practices and commitments of school leaders and teachers can only be successful if two key issues are deliberately addressed (Smith 1993). The teachers must come to understand the intentions of the proposals, the reasons and assumptions on which they are based and the implications for changes in their roles and practices. Through these procedures, the teachers develop some commitment to the proposals and changes.

This alone is not sufficient, according to Smith. Humans, in a context of change, do not respond as much to rational argument as they do to interests, feelings, concerns and anxieties. As humans, we are more likely to base our practices on habits, interests and beliefs than on rational- empirical evidence.

The most important issue in attempting to negotiate a curriculum proposal is that of providing procedures to address the interests, concerns, perceptions and beliefs and associated feelings of the implementers, that is the school leaders and teachers, to the proposed changes and their changed roles. "It is only through such processes that school leaders and teachers can come to change their practices. This process of normative-re-educative change is consuming time and resources but, in the long run, is the only way of ensuring a longlasting and effective change in practices congruent with any proposed curriculum reform" (Smith 1993).

The fact that school improvement takes time, and that it is difficult, is obvious to everyone who has tried it. The initial enthusiasm of many school leaders soon changes into disappointment. Gradually, they passively watch how new ideas and projects come and go. The school leaders play a waiting game and are unintentionally giving much support to the stabilising forces that are active in the school (Nylén 1989). The school leaders´ main task is to influence and develop the stabilising and improving mechanism in a way which would make the central intentions and the local adjustment pos-

sible. The school leader must be given and take the role of personifying the general goals. She has to make critical judgments of the effectiveness of the school, that is, to make the gap between the goals and the everyday life of the school clear to its members.

School leaders must help the teachers to limit and define development needs, and support them in working out a long–term plan for the development work. Closely associated to this ability is the ability to persistently return to the teachers in the school and remind them of agreements, and react according to whether they have been kept or not.

Such strategic planning will become even more important as each school develops its own profile. With the decentralisation of curriculum decision making and the demands that schools develop their own curriculum structure and integration, this will add another very significant dimension to the strategic plan. However, spending school time on such activities is likely to result, in not only in a more effective school for learning, but also in one in which there is strong staff cohesion and commitment (Smith 1993).

Teachers who are involved in development work need encouragement and support from the school leader. But they also need pressure from the school leader in order to keep agreements (Fullan, 1992). Either one without the other will result in a very high likelihood of failure. When resistance is caused by fear of something new, or by uncertainty or by a feeling of failure, the school leader must be sensitive to reactions and have the patience of a saint. But in case of low interest and lack of ambition, the school leader must point out the consequences of doing nothing, demonstrate alternative ways of acting and finally make the teachers choose between the alternatives.

3.3 THE BACKGROUND CONTEXT OF FINNISH PRINCIPALS TOWARD THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

3.3.1 DECENTRALISATION AND ECONOMICAL STRESS

The school system in Finland,according to Eratuuli & Leino (1993), has until now been centralised and bureaucratic. Principals are used to transmitting the orders given by the National School Board to teachers. However, recent years have brought new ideas of how school systems can develop, and now individual schools are encouraged to make their own curriculum and develop themselves within a general framework given by the National School Board. Schools have very actively started this development work. In addition to the decentralisation of decision-making, the schools have been advised to work more productively with less resources than before. At the same time, there seems to be more dissatisfaction with the way schools work. Schools are even blamed for the worsening of the economic situation in society. Hämäläinen (1993) presents the following list as examples of objectives considered important in many Finnish schools:

- a good command of basic skills
- reading, writing and arithmetic
- natural sciences, languages and history
- continuous learning skills
- independent search for information
- a synthesis of knowledge
- the critical evaluation of information
- the ability to express oneself and communicate
- social skills
- the ability to cooperate, good manners
- respect for others, and
- problem solving and decision making (Hämäläinen, 1993).

3.3.2 NEW MODELS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Pedagogical leadership has been delegated to schools, and this new policy will change the role of the principal in particular. According

to Hämälainen (1993), the new demands and responsibilities of school leaders could be described as follows:

1. Setting the goals for the school, creating visions and dreams on the basis of which school based curriculum can be developed.
2. Assessing the current work in order to determine the starting level.
3. Developing the staff's occupational skills in order to reach the goals.
4. Maintaining the staff's working ability under great pressures for change.
5. Going through and managing change.
6. Assessing the results of improvement work.

According to the law, the school leader should lead, guide and supervise instruction and pedagogical development and to take care of certain administrative tasks, financial matters and teaching work. The removal of limits and directives, and the increasing expectations, would have allowed for more rapid changes in the ways school leaders work. This however, has not been the case, because the traditional way principals work is quite passive.

According to the research, the Finnish principal stresses administrative tasks, a good co–operative climate and is an invisible administrator, who leaves the instructional and pedagogical development up to the teaching staff. He organises development projects together with the teachers, but is not directly involved in practical teaching experiments.

Eratuuli and Leino (1993 conclude that the main tasks of Principals remain within familiar administrative routines, including resource provision, schedules and organisations, and in the second place keeping communication channels open and conflicts out. A good working climate is certainly important, but taking good care of the curriculum development and in–service training, as well as other pedagogical tasks, have not yet become necessities. All the results of our study show this without exception. If we want to help schools to become better learning organisations, in which the

organisation of work is an important educative factor for the development of the staff, the organisation of work can be regarded as a curriculum of the work place. Reflective practitioners need an educative work organisation.

In Finland, it takes five to six years for a principal to obtain a master's degree at a university. After receiving this degree, he or she may usually find a permanent job allowig for independent work.The principal is chosen from the teachers of the school after which he/she receives the necessary training. Thus, the conditions for a principal to become a powerful and independent leader are not promising. Today it is common that the principal is chosen for another school. And maybe this situation would be better for the principal. The principal may interpret the value system, including the future hopes, of the teachers and the community in a way which might be appreciated. This gives him/her good opportunities to improve the school by creating an active staff.

The Finnish universities did not have any educational programmes for principals until 1985. The education of principals used to be the normal teacher education. Teachers receive their education in Finland in universities in about five to seven years. During the last eight years the institutes for continuing education at the universities have been very active in principals' continuing education. Since 1993, the National School Board has organised the Principals' professional Development (PD) education. The extent of this education is 40 study credits. One credit is the egvivalent of 40 hours of studying.

In Finland, the school system has become centralised and bureaucratic. The principal's main job has been to comply with the orders given by the National Board of Education. The National School Board transmitted the orders via Administrative Districts and the Local Authorities. The principals' duty was to put the orders into practice. In the last two to three years new ideas have been brought up concerning the administration and how the school system can be improved. Since the year 1994, the schools have been encouraged to formulate their own curriculum and develop themselves within a general framework given by the National Board of Education.

Pedagogical leadership has been delegated to schools, and this new policy is changing the role of the principal in particular.

In Finland, it is now a favourable time for principals to begin this process of change. The principals are enthusiastic about the improvement process.

3.4 TASK AREAS FACTORS OF RUSSIAN PRINCIPALS

The analysed results of individual principals are seen in table 2. From the analysing results of all principals, we formed factors which described the main areas of the principals' actions. On the whole, in the descriptions of Russian principals 12 factors were seen, from which 6 factors appeared only once. The avarage number of factors was four. This means that every principal described an average of three areas of action.

The most common factors were: the atmosphere factor, the administration factor and the goal orientation factor.

The contents of the factors were as follows.

The Atmosphere factor (R2) involves creating an atmosphere of understanding, employing teachers who are kind to children, respecting teachers' enthusiasm, objective additudes and an open climate.

The Atomsphere factor is more abstract than the Cooperation factor. The Cooperation is action in the school, but atmosphere in the essay was preparing possibilities for cooperation.

The Administration factor (R8) referred to holding conferences, organising meetings, leading the educational and up-bringing processes, working with social complexes, the school economy, creating the centre for children' activities and improving work conditions.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF ITEMS

T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	T 9	T 10	T 11	T 12	T 13	T 14	T 15	T 16
R1	R1	R1	R1	R1											
R2		R2		R2											
R3				R3	R3										
		R4		R4		R4									
			R5	R5			R5								
								R6	R6						
R7					R7					R7					
R8		R8													
		R9				R9					R9				
5	1	5	2	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
			S1	S1	S1		S1								
	S2				S2								S2		
	S3	S3		S3				S3							
		S4			S4					S4					
	S5	S5		S5						S5					
S6		S6			S6			S6							
	S7			S7	S7		S7			S7					
	.	S8	S8	S8		S8		S8		S8					S2
		S9	S9	S9						S9		S9			
1	4	6	3	6	5	1	2	3	0	5	0	9	1	0	1
					F1					F1				F1	
		F2		F2	F2								F2		
0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
6	5	12	5	12	9	3	3	3	1	7	1	1	2	1	1

T1: Atmosphere
T2: Caring
T3: Administration
T4: Improvement
T5: Goal-orientation
T6: Cooperation
T7: Creativity
T8: Democracy
T9: Education
T10: Responsibility
T11: Own skill
T12: Neigbourhood
T13: Visibility
T14: Delegation
T15: Curriculumn
T16: Vision

The Goal-orientation factor (R1) focuses on real human beings, that teachers must be good human beings.

In the Goal-orientation factor included the expressions of the outcomes of the staff or students. One example of this is the description of principal R4, about integration of students into adult life.

The next common group of factors were Improvement, Cooperation and Creativity. Together with the first three factors they covered 55 % of all factors of Russian principals. And when put together, the next three factors together covered 78 % of all factors.

In another analysis (Smith & Andrew 1985), all the descriptions of the principals belonged to the group "Principal as resource provider". The dimension "Principal as resource provider" consists of the following components: The principal promotes staff-development activities for teachers and has knowledge about instructional resources. He/she mobiles, and the districts provide assistance to attain academic achievement goals. The principal is considered an important instructional resource in the school.

The character of the Russian principals' essays was quite general. In other words: "I am planning to do this and this". The Russian principals thought through their roles as principals.

4.5 THE TASK AREA FACTORS OF SWEDISH AND FINNISH PRINCIPALS

In the Swedish principals' descriptions 12 factors were found, but all the factors were not the same as in the analysis of the Russian principals' descriptions. The avarage factor number of each principal was 4.3, which was more than the average factor number of the Russian principal.

The results on the whole were different too. The number of strong factors was more than in the case of Russian principals. In the Swedish group there were 5 strong factors which were found in at least four principals' descriptions. After that, still two factors were included in the three descriptions. Together these seven factors covered 82 % percent of all the 12 factors which appeared in the Swedish principals' descriptions.

The strongest was the Goal orientation factor and the Administration factor, which were strong in the Russian group, too. The next

strongest were the Cooperation factor, the Own skills factor and the Care factor.

The greatest difference between Russian and Swedish principals was that the Swedish principals had a more comprehensive area of action. The Swedish principals had 6 important factors and the Russian only three. The Principal group had two of the same factors: thje Administration factor and Goal-orientation factor. The factors which did not appear in the Russian group were the Care factor, the Cooperation factor, the Training factor and the Own skills factor. The Care factor included actions such as (see Appendix 2, principal S3), Working with social workers and the police in order to help students. The Cooperation factor includes, for example, the following actions: (S2) working with children and adults in the organisation; working with people, a confidence group of three teachers. The Training factor included (S8) Taking part in a project; education; maintaining staff creative; The Own skills factor (S7) Mean to improve one self and to be able to have wide influence (S8).

The Finnish data only consisted of information from two principals. Both Finnish principals had the Cooperation factor and the new Curriculum factor in common. There were only 6 factors in the Finnish principal group. It is difficult to conclude anything about Finnish principals as a group, but it seems that it is very close to the Swedish principal's group. The number of factors in the Finnish principal's group was not as high as in the Swedish group.

4 CONCLUSION

The results indicate that the task areas, which the principals regarded as important, differ significantly in the different schools. This cannot be explained by the differences of the schools but more likely by the dissimilation due to background and environmental variants described by the Barnet model. Swedish and Finnish principals described their work as more extensive than Russian principals. The descriptions of Swedish principals stressed administration, goal orientation, development of the knowledge and

skills of the principal, cooperation within the school community and taking care of the school's organisation. The descriptions of the work were very precise and thoughtfully written.

When the research was done the Finnish school administration was being decentralized and the teaching curriculum was being renewed. These points were emphasised in the descriptions of the Finnish principals. The test group included two Finnish principals, who described their work as extensive, but unlike the Swedish principals concentrated very much on the current issues in Finland.

The three most common task areas of the Russian principals were: atmosphere, administration and goal orientation. On average, their descriptions were divided into three task areas and the differences between schools were relatively large, as only three task areas were brought up by five principals, and the remaining 9 task areas basically only by one principal. The descriptions of work were on a fairly general level, for example the atmosphere factor. In this case, the atmosphere factor included general discussions about points that enable cooperation. In general, the Russian principals discussed their own leadership a great deal.

It is difficult to point out a single factor from the background or environment which makes the principals, as individuals and as groups, so different. The Barnet model of leadership, however, has been supported by these results. Analysing the national background of the principals indicates that the systematical principal education, as well as permitting the specialization of schools in Sweden, can be seen in the work of the principals. Changes that make sense for the school, such as the decentralization of administration in Finland, may cause significant changes in the leadership of schools. The reforms in Russia also provide a good foundations for further improving leadership.

It seems that learning from other principals could lead to a good result, constant change in the role of leaders. In the future, the leadership will be studied from the viewpoint of another principal and changes in the leadership will be explained.

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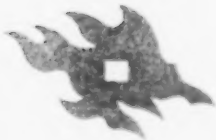

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